

Formal structures, relational realities: Unpacking cross-domain coordination in Dutch municipalities

A comparative case study on the influence of organisational structure on relational coordination in the complex assignment of educational housing of Dutch municipalities

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Preface

This thesis marks the completion of my Master's program Organisational Design and Development at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. With a background in engineering and a focus on organisational design, I have developed a deep interest in bridging the technical aspects of structure with the lived realities of human collaboration. The subject of this thesis "Formal structures, relational realities: Unpacking cross-domain coordination in Dutch municipalities" reflects that connection. The Master's program, together with the collaboration with Berenschot, provided both the theoretical foundation and practical perspective to explore how organisational structures shapes cross-domain collaboration in real-life settings.

Conducting this research came with challenges, yet it has also been a rewarding process of growth and discovery. I am proud of the result and hope it contributes, in some way, to improving how municipalities and other public organisations structure themselves to meet today's demands.

I am deeply grateful to my university supervisors dr. Stefan Heusinkveld and prof. dr. Patrick Vermeulen, for their guidance, constructive feedback and consistent support throughout this thesis process. A special thanks goes to Anne Rensen, with whom I had the pleasure of sharing this journey. Working together made the process not only more enjoyable, but also more insightful. I also thank the professionals at Berenschot's 'Inrichten van Organisaties' team, especially Elise Wolberink and Laura van Schaik, for their openness and collaboration. Finally, I thank my family and friends for their continued support and encouragement.

Lastly, I extend my gratitude to both municipalities and all respondents who generously shared their time and perspectives. Their openness made it clear that the research was not only relevant in theory, but also meaningful in practice. In the coming period, Anne and I will translate the insights from our studies into practical recommendations with the hope they will contribute to further dialogue and improvement in organisational design.

's-Hertogenbosch, August 2025

Bregje Kohlen

Abstract

Cross-domain collaboration is increasingly essential for Dutch municipalities to address complex societal challenges. While organisational design theory offers guidance on designing adequate structures, little is known about how such structures shape the conditions for coordination across formal boundaries. This thesis examines how organisational structure influences relational coordination in the cross-domain collaboration of municipal assignments. A qualitative comparative case study was conducted in two Dutch municipalities, focusing on educational housing assignments. Semi-structured interviews were analysed using the Gioia methodology, enabling a systematic progression from participants' perspectives to higher-order theoretical insights. The findings show that structural design affects the coordination context (the amount of coordination dependencies, the scope of focus, ad-hoc involvement, and the reliance on individual initiative) which in turn shape whether relational coordination can emerge or remains fragile. Structural shortcomings, such as structural ambiguity, fragmentation, misalignment of responsibility and expertise, and the absence of mechanisms for shared direction, increase reliance on informal and individual efforts. This research bridges De Sitter's sociotechnical design perspective with relational coordination theory, highlighting how organisational design can proactively create conditions in which relational coordination thrives. Practically, the results underline the importance of aligning structure, foundational design conditions, and resource allocation to enable effective cross-domain collaboration.

Keywords: Organisational design; Relational coordination; Cross-domain coordination; Municipalities; Coordination context

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1. Introduction

Dutch municipalities increasingly face complex societal challenges that cut across traditional departmental boundaries. These cross-domain issues, such as educational housing, sustainability, or creating healthy living environments, require collaborations between professionals from different domains (Gort, C., advisor at Berenschot personal communication, April 2, 2025; Oseland, 2019; Wolbers et al., 2017).

Such challenges are often categorised as ‘wicked problems’, issues without a clear definition or solution, characterised by high interdependence between tasks across different knowledge departments (Cejudo & Michel, 2017; Hendriks et al., 2014; Karré et al., 2012). Yet municipal organisations are typically structured into functionally structured domains and operate as separate systems (Whetsell et al., 2020). While this structure can support efficiency within domains (Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009), it provides limited built-in mechanisms for coordination across domains. This can lead to fragmentation, ambiguity over ownership, and coordination challenges when assignments span multiple domains (Hendriks, et al., 2014).

In these conditions, coordination becomes a central and ongoing challenge. Organisational structure, defined as the way activities are divided and allocated to roles (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019; Smits, n.d.), plays a critical role in shaping the conditions under which such collaboration unfolds. Sociotechnical scholars such as De Sitter (1998) have emphasized designing structures to minimize unnecessary coordination by grouping tasks intelligently and supporting team autonomy. However, this principle assumes that coordination needs can be largely reduced through design, an assumption increasingly challenged in today’s dynamic and interdependent organisational settings (Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009). This tension is particularly visible in municipalities, where wicked problems inherently span domains (Hendriks et al., 2014; Karré et al., 2012), resisting full “coordination minimalization”.

Although sociotechnical approaches such as De Sitter’s integrate both technical and social dimensions of work design, they primary focus on minimising coordination needs through structural configuration. This focus offers limited guidance for how coordination should be enacted when cross-domain dependencies between tasks cannot be eliminated. This gap has prompted organisational design scholars to shift attention towards understanding how coordination is enacted in practice. Okhuysen and Bechky (2009) synthesise coordination research, showing that effective coordination depends not only on structure, but also on the relational and interpretive processes that allow actors to navigate interdependencies.

Relational coordination theory (Gittell, 2002) offers a complementary lens, shifting focus from structural task configuration to the quality of coordination through communication and relationships. It defines shared goals, shared knowledge, mutual respect, and high-quality communication as critical for effective coordination, particularly under time pressure, uncertainty and high interdependence (Gittell, 2002; Bolton, et al., 2021). In much of RC literature, structure is treated as a contextual condition rather than as a designable variable that shapes coordination (cf. Gittell, 2002; Havens et al., 2010). While Bolton et al., (2021) explicitly attempt to link “organisational structures” to relational coordination, their operationalisation emphasises practice-level arrangements (e.g., shared conflict resolution, shared space) rather than design-level choices or parameters of tasks, roles and interdependencies.

Together, these perspectives reveal a fundamental gap in both theory and practice. While structural approaches aim to reduce coordination needs, and relational approaches explain how coordination occurs, neither fully addresses how organisational structure can be intentionally designed to support coordination across domains when interdependence cannot be reduced. This gap is particularly present for Dutch municipalities, which increasingly require cross-domain collaboration while remaining organised along functional lines. Understanding the relationship between structural arrangements and the emergence of relational coordination could therefore provide valuable insight into how municipalities address complex, interdependent challenges.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the following research question:

In what ways does organisational structure influence relational coordination in cross-domain collaboration in municipalities?

1.1 Research relevance

1.1.1 Academic relevance

This study contributes to academic literature by bridging two frameworks often studied separately: organisational design and relational coordination. By integrating these perspectives, it offers a more nuanced understanding of how structural conditions enable or constrain relational coordination. It extends organisational design theory by addressing the management of unavoidable interdependencies within structurally fragmented, cross-domain contexts. In doing so, it aligns with recent calls to incorporate relational perspectives into

design theory, particularly in complex environment with high interdependence, uncertainty and time pressure (Bolton et al., 2021). Furthermore, it adds to relational coordination theory by examining structure not as a static backdrop but as a variable that shapes the conditions under which relational coordination can emerge.

1.1.2 Practical & societal relevance

Municipalities continue to face difficulties in cross-domain collaboration despite structural reforms and formal coordination mechanisms (Aardema & Korsten). As public challenges grow more complex, insights into how to design structures that foster relational coordination are increasingly valuable. This research offers practical guidance for aligning structural design with the relational dynamics needed for effective, sustainable collaboration across domains in the public sector.

1.2 Outline of thesis

This thesis includes four remaining chapters. Chapter two describes the theoretical background, including an operationalization of the key concepts in the research question. Chapter three outlines the methodological approach used in this study. Chapter four presents the findings, followed by chapter five which interprets the findings and proposes a conceptual framework to bridge the theoretical gap. Chapter six closes with a conclusion, including limitations, future research, and practical implications.

2. Theoretical background

This chapter introduces the key theoretical concepts that guide this study: organisational structure, coordination, and relational coordination. First, a brief overview is given of how organisational structure has been approached in theory, and how it shapes coordination needs within organisations. Building on this, the concept of coordination is discussed to understand how organisations respond to these structural dependencies. Relational coordination is then introduced as the lens through which coordination is analysed in this study, with particular attention to its relevance in settings with high interdependence, uncertainty and time pressure. Finally, organisational structure and relational coordination are connected on the basis of theoretical exploration, identifying points of complementarity gaps that inform this study's analytical perspective.

2.1 Organisational structure

Organisational structure refers to the ways in which organisational activities are divided into tasks and allocated to employees (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019; Smits, n.d.). Traditional organisation theory has addressed this from various angles. Early bureaucratic models (e.g., Weber, 1992/1978) emphasized the formal allocation of roles, authority and standard procedures. Later perspectives like Mintzberg's (1980) configurations, proposed that structural forms emerge in response to contextual factors such as environment, size or work complexity. Similarly, Thompson (1967) introduced the idea that structural design should align with the degree of task interdependence and environmental uncertainty, highlighting the importance of structure in managing internal complexity.

While these perspective provide useful foundations, this study adopts a sociotechnical approach rooted in the work of De Sitter (De Sitter, Den Hertog, Dankbaar, 1997). This theory views organisation as systems of both technical and social components, meaning that structural design choices cannot be separated from human actors who enact them. This integration of technical processes and social relations lies at the core of sociotechnical thinking, and underpins the assumption that well-designed structures support both operational effectiveness as the autonomy and meaningful involvement of employees. By aligning task structure with these principles, organisations aim to enhance both the quality of work (e.g. motivation, meaningfulness, development) and the quality of organisation (e.g. flexibility, efficiency, resilience).

To analyse structure, De Sitter et al. (1997) introduced seven interrelated design parameters, summarized in Table 1 below. These parameters are grouped into three

overarching categories: operational structure (how tasks are divided), regulatory structure (how control is divided), and the degree of separation between the two. These parameters provide a framework for understanding the complexity of a work process and its coordination needs.

Table 1, *Organisational structure design parameters (De Sitter et al., 1997; Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019)*

Type	Parameter	Definition
Operational structure	Functional concentration	The degree to which tasks are related to all order types. Order type can be based on place, client, output, etc.
	Operational differentiation	The degree to which operational tasks are differentiated into preparation, production, and support activities.
	Operational specialization	The degree to which operational tasks are narrowly focused, covering only a small part of the overall operational process
Regulatory structure	Regulatory differentiation into parts	The degree to which regulatory tasks are divided into distinct parts of monitoring, assessing, and acting.
	Regulatory differentiation into aspects	The degree to which the three forms of regulation, strategic regulation, regulation by design, and operational regulation are assigned to separate tasks.
	Regulatory specialization	The degree to which the regulatory scope (part of the production process or scope of control) are narrowly focused, addressing only a small scope of regulatory responsibility.
Separation OT/ RT	Separation of operational and regulatory tasks	the degree to which regulatory and operational activities are assigned to different tasks

Each parameter can be scored on a continuum from low to high. Low scores represent integrated task designs with fewer coordination dependencies, which is associated with higher quality of work and quality of organisation, and lower structural complexity. In contrast, high scores reflect fragmented or specialized structures that increase coordination needs and the potential for misalignment. While originally developed to guide redesign efforts, the framework is also highly suitable as a diagnostic tool for understanding existing structures (De Sitter et al., 1997). It allows researchers to identify which structural choices may increase or require additional coordination mechanisms, but it provides little guidance on how such coordination is enacted when dependencies remain.

2.2 Coordination

Coordination refers to the integration of tasks and activities to achieve collective goals, particularly when work is distributed across multiple actors (Thompson, 1967). In organisational theory, various mechanisms have been proposed to manage coordination, such as standardization, mutual adjustment, and hierarchical supervision (Mintzberg, 1980; Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009). However, as organisations become more complex and interdependent, traditional mechanisms alone do not address the dynamic and relational nature of coordination (Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009).

Rather than viewing coordination purely as a result of structure or predefined mechanisms, scholars have increasingly focused on coordination as an emergent process embedded in daily interactions. Okhuysen and Bechky (2009) propose that effective coordination requires three integrating conditions: accountability (knowing who is responsible for what), predictability (knowing when and how tasks will be carried out), and common understanding (shared knowledge of goals, processes, and interdependencies). These conditions are not automatically established through formal structures alone, but often emerge through communication, relationship-building, and situational adaptation.

This perspective is particularly relevant in settings like public organisations, where formal roles and informal practices often coexist, and where coordination must frequently occur across team and domain boundaries (Whetsell, et al., 2020). To understand such complex interactions, it is essential to examine not only how structure shapes coordination needs (as in De Sitter), but also how coordination actually unfolds through communication and relationships. This leads to the concept of relational coordination (Gittell, 2002), which provides a lens to analyse coordination in terms of quality of interaction between roles.

2.3 Relational Coordination

Relational coordination, referred to as ‘RC’ in this section, is defined as a “mutually reinforcing process for coordinating work”, which focuses on “communicating and relating for the purpose task integration” (Bolton, Logan & Gittell, 2021, p. 292-293). The framework is developed by Jody Hoffer Gittell (2002) to explain how effective coordination is achieved, emphasizing the quality of communication and relationships among participants. RC includes specific dimensions of relationships and communication which reinforce each other, as summarized in Table 2 below. This mutually reinforcing process of communicating and relating is a network of ties between roles and can be measured from the perspective of each role using the validated Relational Coordination Survey (Gittell et al., 2000), as well as other quantitative and qualitative adaptations of it (Bolton et al., 2021)

Table 2, *Relational Coordination dimensions (Gittell, 2002; Havens et al., 2010; Bolton et al., 2021).*

Dimension	Indicator	Description
Relationships	Shared goals	The extent to which other workgroups are seen as having shared goals for the work process.
	Shared knowledge	The extent to which other workgroups are seen as understanding the role of others in the work.
	Mutual Respect	The extent to which other workgroups are seen as valuing and respecting the role of others in the work process.
Communication	Frequent	The extent to which communication from other workgroups is seen as sufficiently frequent.
	Timely	The extent to which communication from other workgroups is seen as on time, received when needed.
	Accurate	The extent to which communication from other workgroups is seen as accurate.
	Problem-solving	When problems arise, the extent to which other workgroups are seen as seeking solutions more so than placing blame.

RC has shown particular relevance in contexts characterised by high interdependence, uncertainty, and time pressure (Gittell, 2002; Bolton et al., 2021). While these conditions are consistently highlighted in the RC literature, they are rarely explicitly defined. In this study, they are interpreted in line with how they are applied within RC research. High interdependence is understood as the mutual reliance between roles to complete interconnected tasks. Uncertainty follows Gittell’s (2002 b) definition as “lack of information relative to the requirements”, but is interpreted more broadly (as it seems to be used in most RC research) to include the unpredictability of tasks or circumstances. Time pressure refers to the need to coordinate under strict deadlines or urgent demands.

While RC was initially developed to analyse frontline coordination in service organisations (Gittell, 2001), it has since been applied more broadly to contexts with complex, interdependent, and time-sensitive work. This fits the context of the public sector, as Wolbers et al. (2017) note, the core coordination challenge in such settings is “how to achieve coherent collective action when actors, tasks and responsibilities are distributed across space, time and

organisational boundaries”(p.4). This challenge is particularly relevant in municipal settings, where cross-domain projects such as educational housing must overcome both structural fragmentation and diverse professional logics. Recent RC literature has begun to examine enabling conditions for effective coordination as synthesized by Bolton et al. (2021), yet these studies rarely conceptualise organisational structure from a design perspective.

2.4 Connecting organisational structure and relational coordination

Although organisational structure and relational coordination have largely developed as separate lines of inquiry, their potential complementarity is evident. Organisational structure perspectives such as De Sitter’s focus on reducing coordination needs through structural integration, but give little guidance on *how* coordination is enacted when interdependencies remain. Relational coordination, in contrast, explains how coordination emerges through relationships and communication, yet tends to treat structure as a fixed backdrop. As a results, little is known about how concrete design choices, such as those captured in De Sitter’s parameters, enable or constrain the emergence of relational coordination. This gap is particularly evident in cross-domain municipal assignments where structural fragmentation and high interdependence under time pressure are the norm.

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted to address the research question, including research design, data-collection procedures, data analysis, quality criteria and ethical considerations. Throughout this chapter, attention is paid to ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, in line with the trustworthiness criteria for interpretive qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.1 Research design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore how organisational structure and relational coordination manifest in municipalities dealing with cross-domain challenges. A qualitative approach is suited to capturing rich, context-dependent realities (Mohajan, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Rather than isolating variables or testing predefined hypotheses, this study seeks to understand how employees interpret and experience organisational structures and coordination practices across domains,. The aim is not to identify a singular ‘truth’, but to explore how individuals make sense of the systems they navigate.

This interpretive orientation aligns with a constructivist epistemological stance, in which reality is socially constructed, context-bound, and co-created in interaction between researcher and participant (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This stance fits the study’s focus on lived experience, how structural features are perceived and enacted, and how coordination is experienced across boundaries. The theoretical perspectives of De Sitter et al (1997) and Gittell (2002) serve as sensitising concepts, guiding inquiry without predetermining findings (Blumer, 1954). These theoretical lenses support credibility and confirmability through explicit linkage between data and interpretation, while allowing for exploration of emerging themes.

Relational coordination has been studied through both quantitative and qualitative inquiry (Gittell et al., 2000; Bolton et al., 2021). Given this study’s interest in how actors make sense of cross-domain work, relational coordination will be approached qualitatively. Examining when and how respondents describe shared goals, knowledge, respect and the qualities of communication in practice. This allows attention to tensions, boundary-crossing events, and role interfaces that are less visible in standardised measures, while maintaining traceability from accounts to concepts.

To structure the process of inductive theorizing, this study follows Gioia et al. (2013), which emphasizes a close connection to participants’ language in early coding phases, followed by abstraction into second-order themes and aggregate dimensions. This brings

transparency (dependability) and preserves respondents' language (confirmability). To support this inductive process with sufficient depth and contextual grounding, the study follows a comparative case design of two Dutch municipalities working on educational housing, an assignment that inherently spans domains. A comparative case study enables constant comparison within and across cases (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019; Yin, 2014), allowing for an in-depth exploration in the specific cases.

3.1.1 Case selection

Two municipalities were selected using first a selection of purposive sampling based on three criteria:

- 1) Medium organisational size, population between 30,000 – 100,000 (CBS, n.d.) to ensure internal organisational capacity across domains without excessive specialization or external outsourcing.
- 2) Domain-based structure, to allow analysis of collaboration within the organisation across domains.
- 3) Active engagement with a cross-domain challenge, involving both the social and physical domains.

Following these criteria, two municipalities agreed to participate, combining purposive and convenience sampling (Yin, 2014). In consultation with each, the focal assignment was defined as educational housing. Although similar in topic the nature of both assignments differed across the two cases. Municipality A was developing a strategic Integrated Housing Plan (IHP), while municipality B was implementing an operational Integrated Child Centre (IKC). They also differed in the formal allocation of responsibility. Table 3 below summarises key contextual factors of both cases.

Table 3, Overview of municipalities and contextual factors

	Municipality A	Municipality B
Number of inhabitants (approximately, CBS 2025)	70,000	45,000
Organizational structure	Domain structure (Services and operations, social, physical)	Domain structure (Services and operations, social, physical)
Urbanity	Single urban centre, with a relatively dense and spatially constrained territory	Merged municipality composed of a city with multiple towns, with a more dispersed spatial layout
Formal structural responsibility for educational housing	Physical domain	Social domain
Assignment	IHP (policy)	IKC (implementation)

3.1.2 Case context

Dutch municipalities are typically organized into functionally specialized domains, such as the social, physical and business domains (Aardema & Korsten, 2009). Each domain is responsible for a specific set of policy fields and operates through departments or teams with separate management lines. Decision-making and coordination primarily take place within these domains, where employees focus on domain-specific goals and assignments.

When assignments span across domains, municipalities often establish temporary or thematic collaborations, such as project teams, interdepartmental working groups, or designated coordinator. There is no standardised organisational model for these collaborations and arrangements vary according to local preferences, organisational history, and the nature of the challenge (Aardema & Korsten, 2009; Christensen & Laegreid, 2007; Hendriks et al., 2014). As a result, formal structures for cross-domain work are generally limited, and coordination relies on flexible arrangements (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Wolbers et al., 2017).

In the municipalities studied here, responsibility for educational housing formally resides in a single domain. Within that domain, an appointed assignment leader is tasked with the responsibility of the educational housing assignment and facilitating collaboration with the other domain involved. This role does not carry formal authority over multiple domains. This description provides the structural context necessary to assess how findings may transfer to other cross-domain settings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.2 Data collection procedure

3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

This study collected data through semi-structured interviews, chosen for their ability to explore complex and context-dependent organisational phenomena while allowing flexibility to follow emerging themes (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019). The format balanced a set of predefined open-ended questions, with the freedom to adapt to respondents' expertise and perspectives. This ensured consistent coverage of topics relevant to the research question while creating space for participants to share experiences in their own terms (Bleijenbergh, 2015; Gioia et al., 2013).

The interview guide, developed jointly with a fellow master's student conducting a related but independent study, was informed by the study's sensitising concepts. Questions were phrased in accessible terms (e.g., using "collaboration" or "alignment" rather than

“coordination”) to support participant understanding. Minor adjustments were made for higher-level respondents (e.g., managers, alderman) to address their strategic rather than operational involvement. Both interview guides can be found in Appendix A.

Three thematic blocks guided all interviews: (1) roles and responsibilities, (2) the nature of the assignment, and (3) cross-domain collaboration. Each interview concluded with an open question to capture additional relevant topics. Interviews were conducted between 16 May and 24 June 2025, lasted 35-75 minutes depending on availability, and took place either in person at municipal offices or via Microsoft Teams. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

3.2.2 Sampling

Respondents were selected through purposive sampling in consultation with domain managers in both municipalities. The aim was to capture a diverse perspectives on the focal assignment across domains, organisational levels, and roles, ensuring a rich understanding of structural and relational conditions (Gittell, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The criteria were: (1) 5-8 respondents per municipality, (2) active involvement in the assignment, (3) representation from both the social and physical domains, and (4) inclusion of different managerial levels.

Fifteen respondents participated, seven from municipality A and eight from municipality B (Tale 4). While most met all criteria, some provided valuable contextual insights despite involvement from more of a distance, for example the alderman’s political perspective on domain boundaries and collaboration, or an operational staff member involved only in later project phases.

The interviews were conducted municipality-by-municipality to allow me as researcher to familiarise with each organisational context before moving to the next. This sequencing helped refine questioning in the second case and avoid confusion between the similar assignments. Although thematic saturation was not reached, reflecting the complexity and diversity of the perspectives, this aligns with the study’s exploratory aim to capture a broad range of lived experiences rather than exhaustively catalogue all possible views.

Table 4, overview of respondents

	Position	Domain	Duration	Location	Reference
Municipality A	Senior policy officer education	Physical	01:15:00	Online	R1
	Strategic advisor policy and execution	Social	00:35:42	Physical	R2
	Domain manager	Physical	00:48:52	Physical	R3
	Project manager	Physical	00:38:56	Physical	R4
	Domain manager	Social	00:50:50	Physical	R5
	Education policy officer	Social	00:35:30	Physical	R6
	Education policy officer	Social	00:59:30	Online	R7
Municipality B	Project leader	Social	01:01:18	Online	R8
	Spatial planning officer	Physical	00:54:17	Physical	R9
	Spatial planning officer	Physical	01:07:15	Physical	R10
	Alderman	Not part of the civil organisation – Council mayor & alderman	00:56:39	Online	R11
	Domain manager	Social	01:00:43	Online	R12
	Junior policy officer education	Social	01:05:48	Online	R13
	Team manager social policy	Social	00:51:06	Physical	R14
	Domain manager	Physical	00:53:16	Online	R15

3.3 Data analysis technique

After the interviews were conducted these were transcribed using Microsoft Teams’ and Word’s built-in transcription tools, then manually reviewed and corrected to ensure accuracy. This enhanced dependability by providing a precise record of the data for analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Following the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2013) the data was analysed in two coding rounds. This approach provided a systematic way to stay close to participants’ perspectives in the early stages while allowing for abstraction to higher-order concepts. It was particularly useful for capturing and comparing differences and similarities between the two

cases, enabling the development of theoretically grounded aggregate dimensions. Transcripts were imported into Atlas.ti. With the first round of coding, interpretative notes were added to most codes to document emerging insights and maintain a transparent link between raw data and conceptual meaning, supporting confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This initial coding process resulted in 750 first order codes which progressed toward higher-order abstraction, this covered an overly broad scope. While the explorative nature of the study allows for the inclusion of unexpected themes, a critical reflection on their relevance to the research question was necessary. As a result, codes unrelated to cross-domain collaboration within the municipal civil organisation were excluded from further analysis. This included the removal of codes related to political influence on the civil organisation, the role of external actors like school boards, and examples drawn from respondents' earlier work in other municipalities or unrelated projects. This refinement narrowed the focus, ensuring that the analysis remained coherent and aligned with the study's central aim.

Following this refinement, the coding process was restarted with a fresh more defined perspective. All transcripts were revisited and recoded from scratch, using the refined scope as the primary analytical lens to uncover the link between organisational structure and relational coordination. This second round produced 314 first-order codes, again accompanied with analytical notes. All codes were then exported to Excel, for more efficient aggregation, as Atlas.ti does not easily support large-scale restructuring. While the Gioia methodology's focus on preserving rich data at the first-order level can limit initial overview, it strengthens confirmability by ensuring traceability from higher-level concepts back to participants' own perspectives.

From the first order codes, the next step moved from descriptive account to analytical interpretation. Each code was examined with the guiding question: "What does this mean for my research question?" This process led to the formulation of 28 second-order themes, and the removal of 38 codes with limited analytical contribution. Due to the large number of themes that emerged, moving directly to aggregate dimensions would have risked oversimplification and the loss of important nuance. To address this, five subdimensions were developed within two aggregate dimension, grouping analytically distinct but closely related themes. For example, within the aggregate dimension of 'ambiguity in organisational structure' the three subdimensions 'lack of structural embedding', 'ambiguity in roles, tasks & responsibilities', and 'capacity constraints' were defined. One second-order theme, present only in municipality B, was excluded because it linked structural misalignment with political

influence, an area outside the study's scope. Analytical memos documented these interpretive decisions and alternative considerations, enhancing transparency, confirmability and dependability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constant comparison within and across the two cases was applied throughout, refining categories until they reflected recurring patterns grounded in the data. This resulted in five final aggregate dimensions: Ambiguity in organisational structure, misalignment between responsibility and expertise, organisational fragmentation, lack of mechanisms for shared direction, and coordination via assigned leadership.

The resulting structure is visualised in figure 1 below as a Gioia-style data structure (Gioia et al., 2013), capturing the analytical progression and illustrating the linkages between the raw data, emergent concepts, and higher-order theoretical patterns. To ensure full transparency, Appendix B provides the complete list of first-order codes and their connections to higher-order categories.

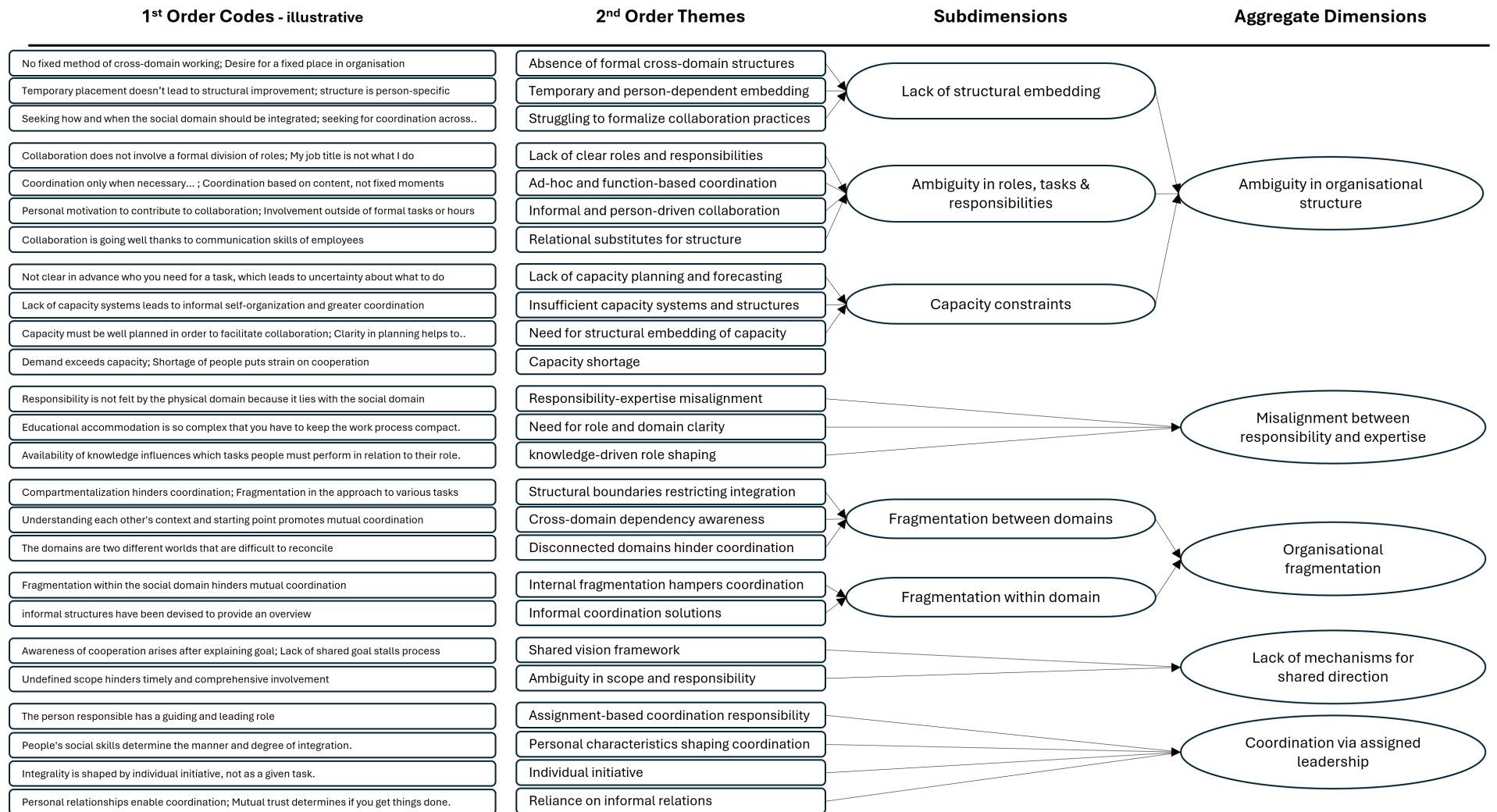


Figure 1, Data structure from 1st order codes to aggregate dimensions

3.4 Ethical considerations

This research was conducted in full accordance with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (NWO, 2018), which outlines five fundamental principles: honesty, scrupulousness, transparency, independence, and responsibility. These principles guided my approach throughout the study, from design to reporting. Given the relational nature of the topic, particular attention was paid to how participants' perspectives were represented and how anonymity was safeguarded.

All participants received an information letter outlining the study's purpose and procedures. Informed consent was verbally obtained at the start of each interview. Personally identifiable information was treated confidentially at all times. Anonymized data were used in all reporting, and only general descriptions of roles and municipalities were provided to prevent traceability. Municipal names were left out entirely.

During data collection, one respondent expressed concern about the risk of identification. This was addressed through follow-up communication, adjustments to the transcript and consent on the use of quotes in this report. Anonymity was prioritized over verbatim accuracy, in line with Gioia et al. (2013). This case highlighted the need for ongoing ethical reflexivity rather than one-time consent.

These measures were integral to ensuring the trustworthiness of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Credibility was pursued by accurately representing participants' voices, dependability through a transparent and consistent research process, confirmability by grounding interpretation in the data rather than personal bias, and transferability by providing sufficient contextual detail without compromising anonymity.

4. Results

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis following the five aggregate dimensions that together reflect organisational factors shaping cross-domain coordination in municipal assignments. These factors combine formal and informal elements, ranging from structural arrangements and role definitions to the relational and procedural dynamics influencing how domains work together.

4.1 Ambiguity in organisational structure

4.1.1 Lack of structural embedding

Data from both municipalities seem to indicate the absence of formal structures to support cross-domain collaboration (R1,7,8,12,13,15). As R8 described a lack of established structures for societal real estate assignments that span multiple domains: “Well, societal real estate is somewhat neglected. This is the case in many municipalities, where it became clear that ‘okay, we have societal real estate, we need to do something with it.’ [...] So, trying to give shape to that, that is still a challenge.” Similarly, R15 emphasized the lack of generic rules for cross-domain collaboration but pointed to a positive shift in the IKC project, where both domains are now involved.

In both cases, collaboration between domains is emerging but remains informal and lacks predefined structure. As R1, leader of the IHP assignment, stated: “if you don't give him the ‘why’, he's just stacking bricks.” R1 and R6 are actively exploring how to involve the social domain more meaningfully within the assignment. R13 also mentioned “I think that once it's there, the collaboration between social and physical is just fine. the main hurdle is getting it started”. Showing the beginning of the collaboration is difficult to set up. The fragility of these structures is also highlighted by R8, an interim manager and the leader in municipality B, mentioned: “At some point you have to let go.[...] I've set it up now and I want it to stay that way, because otherwise it will fall apart again. Then you have to start all over again.” This illustrates that the way of working has to be rebuilt when it is not controlled to stay.

Moreover, the desire to formalize current collaborations is shared by both municipalities (R2,4,7,8). R7 expressed this hope clearly: “I hope this will serve as a catalyst to encourage more consideration of the collaboration between the physical and social domains. [...] that it will be incorporated much more into the existing structure” The quote

illustrates that the current collaboration needs to be embedded within the existing structure to stimulate a more automatic collaboration.

4.1.2 Ambiguity in roles, tasks & responsibilities

In both municipalities, respondents mention that involvement is generally based on someone's function title (R1,2,3,6,7,8,12,13). As R3 noted, "Well, for the functions they have of course, eh? So the education policy officer comes into such a project." R13 confirmed this logic, indicating that colleagues were found based on their function title. However, according to the data (R2,7,12,13) this functional logic does not define clarity in roles or responsibilities, R7 explained their own role: "It has not a formal job title. I think you could call it something like project assistant [...] so my role is mainly to look at the IHP and ask: what does this mean for appropriate education?" This illustrates how R7 has to define their own contribution within the assignment. Similarly, R8 noted confusion about responsibilities in the organisation "What I still see organisationally is that there is still some confusion about people's tasks and roles. Like, is that my task, is that my role?" Illustrating the lack of clarity in the tasks and roles.

This lack of clarity can delay coordination as R7 stated about the involvement of employees in the IHP, "We are mainly involved at moments when it is relevant in terms of content. [...] as a result, we sometimes miss some context as the 'second shell', or are sometimes brought in at a late stage." This quote describes how involvement based on perceived relevance can lead to late-stage engagement and insufficient background.

Moreover, across both cases respondents described how they take on responsibilities beyond their function (R1,2,6,12,13). R12 and R13 noted involuntary expansion, "I get the impression that I'm being drawn into the project role [...] but that is not my job, is it?" (R13). Contrasting, three respondents (R1,2,6), in municipality A took on additional responsibilities from personal initiative: "It is not in my hours or duties to give so much advice, but it affects my work so much." (R6) Illustrating that beyond one's formal obligation additional tasks and hours are executed.

Additionally, respondents R1,3,4,6,10,12,13,14 described that coordination also develops informally beyond the definition of roles and responsibilities, based on personal relationships, mutual trust, and individual willingness to engage across boundaries. As R14 described: "The aspect of, yes, how do you call it, "knowing and being known", that is underestimated, while it is actually one of the most important things. [...] It helps because

you know each other and know where to find each other [...] that's at least as effective as knowledge and expertise, or good planning..." This quote describes that it is not only about knowledge and planning but also about when colleagues know each other and know where to find each other.

In addition, several respondents in municipality A (R3,4) also reflected on the complexity of navigating the municipal structure. R3 described it as "being able to play the game well" R4 explained that success depends on "knowing which buttons to press." R3 elaborated: "Within the municipality, [...] it's about being able to work within that system, which is quite complex, and if you master it well, yes, that makes a huge difference. And then it's mainly about when you need to play which game to get your agenda item properly plugged in. [...] I deliberately call it a game because it also requires skill, yes, it's quite complicated." This points to the complexity of organisational and political strategic insight in role execution.

4.1.3 Capacity constraints

In both municipalities, respondents noted a lack of capacity and the planning of it as a weakness for cross-domain collaboration (R2,3,7,10,12,13,14). R3 summarized the challenge concise: "Time is money and capacity is scarce. [...] team leaders are also concerned about that, saying, 'Well, I don't have that' or 'That is not possible', or 'Do you have extra money for me so I can hire someone?' [...] those are the capacity issues that are at play here." R14 described that planning capacity is not common: "This community is not very good at that. So quite a bit last moment. [...] People have more work to do. And that together sometimes gives, well, pressure." R2 similarly noted that required capacity is often not allocated beforehand. R14 adds that it is very important to define what you need at the start. While R14 notes it as quite the obvious they mentioned it is not always established, people often start doing something, without thinking who is needed, in what way, and for which goal. In municipality A, R1 illustrated this by noting that time investment for the IHP was not clear upfront. While time was not planned, respondents (R1,2,6) indicated this was considered problematic, as they voluntarily exceed their formal roles and allocated hours.

Furthermore, in municipality B, several respondents (R12,13,15) noted the absence of systems for allocating time and budget to cross-domain tasks. As R12 explained: "How we assign [cross-domain] projects and how we account for and pay for the hours spent on them is not regulated, [...] And then you have to deal with that; you can't just say, 'Oh well, forget it,

let's just abandon the whole project.” Indicating that no procedures are present to assign cross-domain coordination but the tasks need to be executed in some way. R12 continued with indicating that no procedures result in informal routes with improvised solutions “Sometimes you just have to take action [...] And then you solve it on a different route, on a different track, and then you ensure that the project continues.” R13 adds that this lack of embedding capacity now means that planning who need to be involved requires R13 to think ahead as much as possible.

4.2 Misalignment between responsibility and expertise

In both municipalities, respondents (R2,4,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15) describe a mismatch between formal responsibility and the location of substantive expertise. This was particularly evident in municipality B, where the formal responsibility for educational housing lies within the social domain. Even though, most knowledge and execution capacity is situated in the physical domain. As R12, social domain manager, explained: “Is it a logical choice? Well, I don't think so. I think education, housing policy and education policy fit very well within the social domain. I don't think building schools is a very logical choice for social policy investment, [...] it's really much more real estate-oriented work” Indicating a misfit between current division of responsibility and what would be logical. Only R13, who holds the policy role for educational housing, mentioned benefits to the current arrangement, such as proximity to other education policy officers. However, even they acknowledged that in terms of content, the role might fit better within the physical domain.

In municipality A, the mismatch was raised less prominently. While R4 suggested that educational housing may align better with the social domain, due to its link to educational needs, even if the formal owner is in the real estate department. Other respondents (R1,3,5,6,7) emphasised that R1 has extensive knowledge of both domains. With R1 positioned in the physical domain as educational housing policy officer, R7 noted: “I do not need to explain much to [R1] about the social side of things. She might even be able to fill in the blanks better than I can” highlighting that R1 has extensive knowledge of the social domain.

Next to alignment at the domain-level also the individual role level was noted to require alignment between responsibility and expertise. R12 described mentioned when the IKC project started not the right knowledge and experience were present to lead the project: “We had [R13], who had just been appointed as a junior policy officer and really had to learn

the job. [...] I thought what is this? Two people who are basically unqualified, untrained, and not at the level required to get such an important project off the ground.” Nevertheless, R13 was able to learn the job in the project as R12 later described: “I am very pleased with [R13], because they have really developed enormously. I feel confident in letting them go now, but that was not the case at the time.” A similar view was seen in municipality A, as R2 added that alignment also depends on the availability of the right employees “So, it is not always the case that someone with the necessary knowledge and skills is selected. Yes, we are experiencing staffing challenges in the municipality, as is the case throughout the Netherlands. Therefore, it is often challenging to recruit the right people and place them in the appropriate positions.” This quote illustrates how time constraints can limit having the right expertise within the needed jobs.

4.3 Organisational fragmentation

4.3.1 Fragmentation between domains

Respondents from both municipalities (R1,2,12,13,14) described the organisation as siloed with distinct units, with limited awareness across domains. R13 illustrated this with a metaphor: “I’ll keep looking like this [makes a motion with her hands as if wearing blinders] and I’ll keep going, because otherwise I’ll just fall behind, [...] I think everyone, well everyone, is very much on their own little island. Even within teams themselves.” This reflects how time pressure may foster a narrow task focus, R13 adds that this way of working results in limiting consciousness of what others in the organisation are working on. R4 expressed the desire for more awareness of the cross-domain dependency: “Perhaps there could be a little more awareness that we are not building for ourselves [physical domain]. I am building in order to implement policy, and there is a dependency there.” The lack of awareness can undermine recognition of mutual dependency.

Similarly, R14 observed that structural division remain dominant: “...we are still organized in domains and you are part of this, and you are part of that. And that is what my general observation in [municipality B] is very ‘yes who owns it?’. But you can also think ‘what can I add?’” This reflects fixed-silo thinking that hinders integration. Also R15 referred to “a kind of Chinese wall” between domains.

In municipality A, respondents (R3,4,5,7) similarly noted this distinction, emphasizing mainly cultural and procedural differences between domains. R3 described the “two different worlds” of the domains with the physical domain as “clear, hard, firm and focused on figures,

tasks and demarcations” while the social domain is more “social”, to which R4 adds more “policy based”. R3 elaborated further on the collaboration across domains despite this distinction: “Well, that's a matter of finding each other. And we can help each other enormously in that, but then you have to know where to find each other. [...] I think things are going well at IHP, and that has to do with people [...] But I also have many examples, and have experienced it myself in the past, where there are two worlds. And then you grumble about [...] the other person doesn't understand you or doesn't want to cooperate. And then you're not one community in that sense” This describes that current collaboration in the IHP benefits from the people involved, though past experiences show how disconnection can hinder mutual understanding.

Despite these barriers, the case in municipality B shows improvement. R15 described a past lack of cooperation in educational housing: “We [physical] build for ourselves, if social wants something, they have to do it themselves” Now there is more acknowledgement that physical infrastructure serves social goals, though collaboration is “not good, but better” (R15). As R13 noted that the physical domain is open to collaboration however “I sometimes get the impression that if I don't show up, they forget about me.” Indicating collaboration is not initiated mutually. Similarly the integrality between the two domains has also been developing in the IHP assignment in municipality A, which was merely a physical task (R1, R3, R7).

4.3.2 Fragmentation within domain

Within both municipalities, respondents (R6,7,8,9,13,14) point to internal fragmentation within the social domain as a barrier to effective integral collaboration. R9 explained: “...the social domain is [...] very strictly defined [...] I have the impression that it is much less easy to look beyond boundaries. Whereas in the spatial domain, there is more of an integrated approach” This suggests that boundaries within the social domain can limit integrality. In municipality A, R6 described the education-related work as spread across many colleagues: “I have a lot of contact [...] mainly because we're very fragmented within the organisation. There are a lot of people working there who are involved in education, but we don't work together, so I've come up with all kinds of ideas for that.” Illustrating that his fragmentation demands extra coordination.

To address this, certain individuals have taken on connecting roles, R7 described R6 as “the linking pin when it comes to education”. R6 bridges education in the IHP assignment to

the physical colleague R1, ensuring that the right information is present from different colleagues. R6 acknowledged the informality of this role but stressed the importance: “I am not allowed to call myself coordinator, but nothing related to education should pass me by.” In addition, in municipality B a similar pattern exists. R13 explained their role as focusing on buildings while other policy officers deal with educational content, gathering input through one-on-one conversations and bringing it into the IKC project. In both cases, such connecting roles were described as informal and based on personal initiative, without a formal mandate.

4.4 Lack of mechanisms for shared direction

Across both municipalities, respondents mentioned the importance of a clear, shared vision for effective cross-coordination (R6,7,8,10,14). Yet respondents R1,2,6,7,9,10,14 pointed out this is often lacking in assignments or not structurally embedded. As R8 described why this should be: “There simply needs to be a clear vision. Clear guidelines are needed to implement this [societal real estate] within an organisation. Because you can want all sort of things, say all sort of things, but then it all goes wrong [...] You have to take control yourself.” In municipality A, R1 explained that the absence of shared direction initially stalled the IHP process, which only progressed after actively engaging colleagues across levels to establish common goals. They linked this progress to their organisational position: “If you put an employee in a real estate department with the task of building a school building, you will get at a school building. If you assign someone to a cross-domain position [...] you get to work on it. (R1)” R2 confirmed that the organisational placement of an assignment influences its integrality. Even when a shared vision was present, as in the IHP example, R6 noted it needed translation into organisational development to become effective: “That vision is very nice, but it really needs to be translated into organisational development. [...] No, everyone is working towards their own goal.” This illustrates the importance of embedding the vision into the organisational fabric to move beyond individual objectives.

Respondents also described how the scope of assignments was undefined or evolved during the process. In municipality A, R7 mentioned: “It started out narrow and gradually more and more issues and dilemmas arose,” adding that earlier involvement would have been preferable to also setup the vision. In municipality B, R10 reflected: “It is still unclear to me how much budget we have and what our project scope is [...] that was never defined.” While this ambiguity was viewed as “an opportunity”, it should have been addressed at the start to enable alignment and clarify responsibilities (R10).

4.5 Coordination via assigned leadership

The organisational setup for coordination differs between the two cases. Municipality A uses a flexible pool of colleagues whom the project leader involves when needed (R1,2,6,7), whereas municipality B applies a more formal project-based structure with a project and steering group (all municipality B respondents). In both settings, coordination rests with one person – R1 in A and R8 in B – who organises collaboration, involves relevant employees and domains, and monitors progress.

R1 described their approach as “lean and mean”, involving colleagues like R7 only when necessary to keep workloads manageable. They linked effective coordination to the ability to connect people across domains: “You really need someone who can bring people together in this assignment, and since I've been on all sides of the table, I can do that.” This includes pointing out interdependencies, as in multiple area development cases where space for schools had initially been overlooked by spatial planners: “That is not possible, you really need to have land [...] for schools.” These examples illustrate how the project leader role involves both managing participation and ensuring cross-domain implications are addressed.

Furthermore, within municipality B, all respondents noted that the previous project leader of the IKC-project worked less structurally, resulting in late coordination and stalled progress. R14 explained: “You have a project group with all disciplines, [...] but the cycle does not work quite as well here.” R9 gave the example of another, similar project where a different project leader [as previous project leader] was appointed leading to significantly better collaboration, illustrating that the choice of project leader can play an important role in improving cooperation.

Regarding the current IKC project, R9 described their initial introduction to R8 as unusual, as it took place during a meeting with a school board rather than an internal setting. According to R9, this meant there was no dedicated moment to meet the team, discuss progress, roles, and set a shared starting point. As a result, they felt less actively engaged at the start of R8, waiting to be contacted when their expertise will be needed. R13, by contrast, characterized R8's work style as proactive, with meetings planned in advance. R8 stated that the role requires openness, active outreach and prioritizing communication: “Communication is really number one with everything.” At the time of the interviews, R8 had been in the role for only a few weeks (6-7), so respondents (R10, R12) were cautious about drawing conclusions but were hopeful and had confidence in R8.

These results are summarized in an overview in table 4 below. This shows where the structural factors with their perceived effect on coordination can be found, along with the illustrative observations and mechanisms supporting them.

Table 4, overview of the results

Organisational factor	Perceived effect on coordination	Illustrative observation/ mechanism
Ambiguity in organisational structure	Overall: Absence of formal structures for cross-domain collaboration creates ambiguity, delays, and reliance on informal arrangements.	Collaboration is difficult to initiate and maintain without continuous effort; structures risk dissolving when not actively supported by individuals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of structural embedding 	Cross-domain collaboration is not formally embedded, remaining temporary and dependent on continuous individual effort.	Collaboration requires continuous, active effort to get started and maintain; Temporary setup, lack of permanent organisational location ;Structure relies on individuals involved.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambiguity in roles, tasks & responsibilities 	Functional involvement leads to unclear roles, responsibilities, and delayed coordination, often compensated by informal initiative and personal relationships.	Respondents take on responsibilities beyond formal job descriptions; Success depends on “knowing and being known”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity constraints 	Inadequate capacity and lack of upfront planning hinder effective cross-domain coordination. Limited availability of colleagues results in reliance on improvised, informal solutions.	Collaboration hours rarely planned or budgeted; No uniform capacity system across domains.
Misalignment between responsibility and expertise	Overall: Formal responsibility for educational housing often resides in a domain (e.g. social) with limited substantive expertise, while knowledge is concentrated elsewhere (e.g., physical). Required expertise is not always matched demands of a role.	Individuals with cross-domain knowledge can act as connectors; Work experience (e.g., junior vs senior).
Organisational fragmentation	Overall: Organisational silos and internal fragmentation limit integral collaboration and mutual awareness. Additional coordination needed to align efforts.	Distinct organisational units and specialised roles lead to narrow task focus and limited awareness of other roles; Narrow focus on own expertise; Lack of cross-domain dependencies awareness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragmentation between domains 	Distinct organisational units hinder integral collaboration and awareness of interdependencies across domains.	Individuals focus on their “own little island” tasks; responsibilities understood in fixed silos; cultural differences; “Chinese wall” between domains; different cultures (physical: “clear, hard, task-based”, social: “social, policy-based”)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragmentation within domain 	Internal fragmentation within the social domain (specialized roles) makes it difficult to oversee cross-cutting topics like educational housing.	Responsibilities split across many specialized roles; Linking pin roles needed to bridge fragmentation
Lack of mechanisms for shared direction	Overall: Absence of a clear, shared vision and defined scope hinder cross-domain alignment and can stall initiatives.	Lack of clear vision and scope delays involvement and alignment; Vision needs to be translated into organisational development.
Coordination via assigned leadership	Overall: Coordination largely rests on the personal characteristics, knowledge, initiative, and proactive communication of the leader.	Effectiveness dependent on project leader’s work style (e.g. structured, open communication) and earlier experiences; Lack of initial relationship-building can reduce engagement.

5. Discussion

This chapter delves into the interpretation of the key findings, to position the study's contribution to the literature. A conceptual framework and practical implications are presented.

5.1 Key findings

As summarized in Table 4, this study identified five aggregate dimensions of organisational factors influencing cross-domain coordination: Ambiguity in organisational structure, misalignment between responsibility and expertise, organisational fragmentation, lack of structures for shared direction, coordination via assigned leadership. These dimensions collectively reveal how organisational design choices and the lived reality of municipal structures often create challenges for effective cross-domain coordination, necessitating informal solutions and individual initiatives to bridge gaps.

5.2 Interpretation of key findings

5.2.1 Ambiguity in organisational structure

In both municipalities, respondents pointed to the ambiguity in how cross-domain work is organised, which seems to complicate effective coordination. This ambiguity fosters uncertainty and a heavy reliance on informal mechanisms. The absence of formal structures, such as a general approach or facilitating guidelines across domains, seems to result in what respondents described as “a hurdle in getting started” on an ad-hoc basis. Cross-domain collaboration is not embedded in the organisation, making it fragile, temporary, and placing a continuous burden on individual collaborative efforts.

De Sitter (1998) notes that “The question is not how a system should be managed, but how a system, in uncertainty, manages itself” (p. 1). In the studied municipalities, the temporary nature of assignments means such managing is often left to individuals rather than built into the structure. While educational housing is pointed out to be a legal task, meaning municipalities need to execute them consistently, a fixed and predictable process may be both possible and desirable.

Ambiguity also extends to roles, tasks and responsibilities. Involvement was often based on job titles, yet respondents described having to define their role in practice, creating blurred responsibilities and accountability. This suggests that involvement on generic function might not be enough to define one's responsibilities and role. Additionally, capacity

constraints were seen as an embedded structural weakness. Limited planning and allocation of resources meant that hours for cross-domain collaboration were rarely planned, leading to improvised, informal solutions. While the theory of De Sitter (De Sitter et al., 1997; De Sitter, 1998) is based on designing clear task and role structures that support manageability, the studied assignments were often temporary in nature, requiring these arrangements to be reinvented for each project.

From a theoretical perspective, Gittell (2002) acknowledges that uncertainty is inherent to complex interdependent work, and that relational coordination is particularly effective under such conditions. While shared knowledge in Gittell's framework refers to understanding how each role contributes to the overall work process, the cases show that this foundation was not always present. In some instances, actors not only lacked clarity about how their role related to others, but were also not aware of the relevance of their involvement altogether. This suggests a precondition to relational coordination that is rarely made explicit in Gittell's empirical settings.

5.2.2 Misalignment between responsibility and expertise

Educational housing as an assignment inherently spans across the expertise of both domains. However, in both cases, the formal responsibility for the assignment was positioned in a domain that did not hold the primary substantive expertise for the type of work at hand. This creates a structural misalignment between where responsibility is placed on macro-level and where in-depth content knowledge (should) reside. The extent of this misalignment however varied across the cases, while the gap is widely acknowledged within municipality B, R1 is able to bridge it according to respondents by their cross-domain experience.

Additionally, the lack of needed knowledge on individual role level (micro-level) results in a mismatch of roles and needed knowledge to perform the tasks. From an organisational design perspective, De Sitter et al. (1997) stresses the importance of coupling tasks with the knowledge, resources, and authority required to perform them. A lack of such alignment introduces additional coordination interfaces, which can increase the complexity and uncertainty of the work process. In the present cases, bridging these gaps relied on individuals who could "speak the language" of both domains, a form of cross-domain expertise that facilitated smoother interactions.

The shared knowledge from relational coordination is built when actors not only understand how their work is connected but also recognise the specific expertise others bring

(Gittell, 2002). Structural misalignment of responsibility and expertise may affect the quality of communication as assessments and decisions are not always grounded in substantive expertise. While shared knowledge in RC presumes that actors have the knowledge needed to perform their responsibilities, the present cases suggest that this is not always standard within municipalities. This misalignment may indicate that more communication is needed to align content.

5.2.3 Organisational fragmentation

Across both municipalities organisational silos, between and within domains, limit the development of an integrated perspective on educational housing. Respondents described working in “islands” and along a “Chinese wall” between domains, with units focused on their own priorities. This fragmentation reduces mutual awareness and the ability to anticipate interdependencies, which can undermine coordination. Relational coordination theory (Gittell, 2008) suggest that such fragmentation increases the need for coordination, requiring information to flow more frequently, timely, and completely, alongside shared knowledge of each other’s work. Moreover, building this shared knowledge does not occur spontaneously, it requires active communication and relationships, similar to the findings of this study.

From De Sitter et al. (1998) design parameters perspective, the cases reflect: (1) low functional concentration, with tasks split across units resulting in narrow scopes of order types; (2) high specialization of operational activities, with actors focusing on small parts of the process where employees only execute a sub-activity of the operational process; and (3) a medium operational differentiation, separating preparation and execution activities. Although functional concentration is low, this does not reduce the need for coordination. On the contrary, it requires substantial alignment across domains. These structural conditions increase coordination interfaces, making cross-domain alignment more complex and potentially slowing down decision-making.

The ‘linking pin’ roles observed in this study appear to bridge fragmentation within the social domain, reducing coordination dependencies and actively connecting roles. In Bolton et al.’s (2021) synthesis, boundary spanner roles are described as position that coordinate across functional boundaries. Assumed to increase relational coordination, however, their review showed mixed empirical support for this relationship. The present findings suggest that such roles are able to bridge fragmentation gaps through individual initiative, active communication and relations that extend beyond formal roles and responsibilities.

5.2.4 Lack of mechanisms for shared direction

Across both municipalities, respondents indicated that no formal mechanisms existed to establish and maintain a shared direction. This absence appeared to complicate decisions about who should be involved and at what stage. Respondents' definitions of the assignment often showed notable similarities, suggesting the presence of a broadly shared goal. However, these were typically framed through the lens of individual expertise and domain-specific priorities. Such perspectives reflect the existing fragmentation between and within domains, even when a shared vision was present, respondents described continuing to work towards their own goals. Suggesting that "an organisational development" is needed for a vision to be effective.

Ambiguity in the organisational structure, ad-hoc involvement, and the absence of formal kick-offs or alignment moments seem to place additional pressure on individual initiative. For example, in municipality A, R1's active communication and conviction to ensure shared understanding illustrates how alignment depended on personal effort. From a relational coordination perspective (Gittell, 2002), shared goals require deliberate interaction to transcend domain-specific priorities. The present cases suggest that without supporting mechanisms, such interaction remains reliant on personal effort, making coordination more fragile.

5.2.5 Coordination via assigned leadership

In both municipalities, coordination for educational housing is centralized in the role of the assigned leader. While the assignment involved multiple domains and specialist expertise, all alignment and decision-making flowed through this central figure. The effectiveness of coordination therefore depended heavily on the leader's individual judgement of quality, their network, and their initiative to engage others. Respondents described that when the leader actively fostered cross-domain interaction and maintained oversight, coordination was effective. When such initiative was however lacking, progress and clarity diminished.

De Sitter (1998) emphasises a good structure on designing work so that a group, rather than a single individual, holds shared responsibility for a coherent set of tasks. This reduces the number of handovers and interfaces needed for coordination. In the present cases, the responsibility was not embedded in such a collective structure, making the coordination role highly person-dependent and informally defined.

From the perspective of relational coordination (Gittell, 2002), this arrangement increases the need for communication that is frequent, accurate, and problem-solving,

alongside shared knowledge of each other's work. The findings suggest that while relational coordination can partly compensate for the lack of structural embedding, it also makes collaboration more vulnerable to changes in personnel or leadership style.

5.2.6 The conceptual model

The interpretation of the key findings are summarized in the conceptual framework below in figure 2.

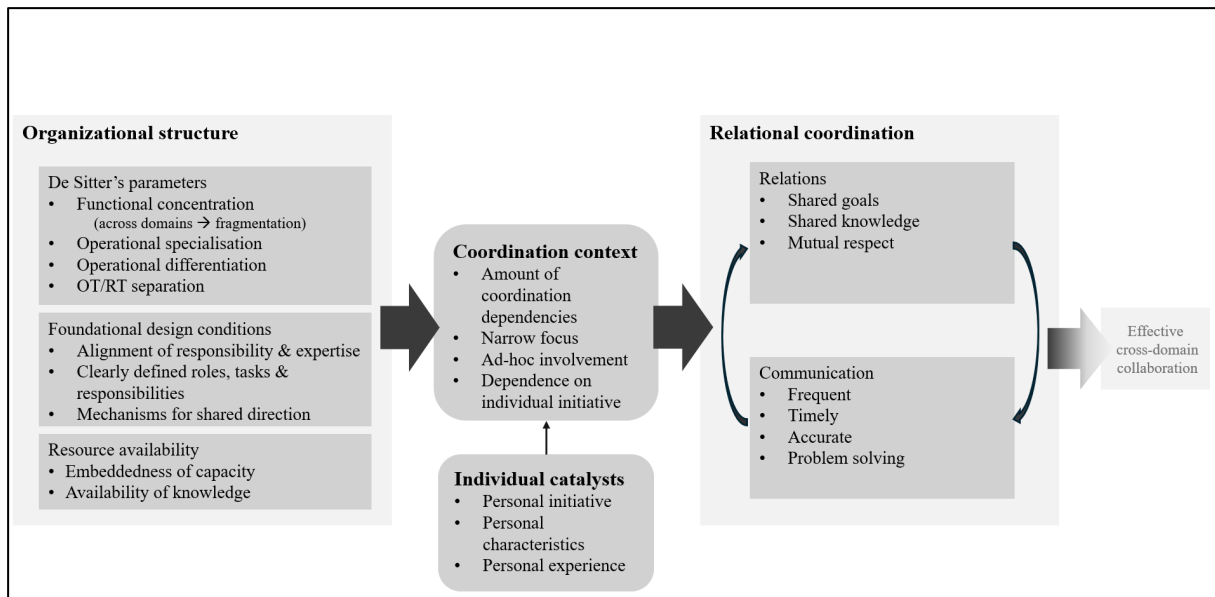


Figure 2. Conceptual model of the influence of organisational structure on relational coordination

This conceptual model visualizes the integrating insights emerging from the study, drawing on organisational design theory (De Sitter, 1998) and relational coordination (Gittell, 2002). It addresses the research question by illustrating how specific structural characteristics observed in the cases appear to shape the conditions under which RC operates.

Organisational structure

The organisational structure is reflected in De Sitter's structural parameters, foundational design conditions, and resource availability. The first block reflects the parameters from De Sitter's operational design principles that were visible in the cases: low functional concentration (tasks allocated to separate domains), high operational specialization (actors focusing on a narrow part of the process), medium operational differentiation (separation between preparation and execution), and separation between operational tasks (OT) and regulatory tasks (RT). These parameters, as they appeared in the cases, created a structural

environment where collaboration required crossing multiple interfaces between units, roles, and functions.

The block of foundational design conditions contains conditions that, while often assumed in organisational design, were absent or inconsistently present in the cases: alignment of responsibility and expertise, clearly defined roles, tasks, and responsibilities, mechanisms for establishing shared direction (e.g., formal kick-offs, defining scope and vision). The absence of these conditions may add to the complexity of collaboration and increase reliance on ad-hoc solutions.

Resource availability emerged as absent in the cases causing resource constraints. Limited availability of time for collaboration, or the reliance on temporary staff and external hires were reported to influence the ease and stability of cross-domain collaboration. These limitations result in ad-hoc involvement and dependence on individual initiative, which may reduce continuity in relationships and hinder the development of shared knowledge. Also the lack of knowledge in specific positions by experience or by a shortage of staff seem to place stress on the effectiveness of coordination.

Coordination context

The combination of the above structural elements shapes what is here termed the coordination context. These are the observations and mechanisms that emerged and seem to explain how organisational structure influences relational coordination. This includes the amount of coordination dependencies (interfaces) a narrow focus on one's own domain priorities, ad-hoc involvement, and dependence on individual initiative to bridge gaps. These elements describe the contextual reality in which relational coordination must operate.

Individual catalysts

Personal initiative, characteristics, and experience emerged in the cases as factors that could compensate for structural shortcomings, enabling shared understanding, alignment, mutual respect, and quality communication. Personal initiative is seen as the ability or willingness to take action independently, without needing to be pushed to do so. Personal characteristics that emerged were personal motivation, communication and social skills, and personality styles such as "being 'blue' or 'yellow'" referring to the DISC-model. Personal experience were mentioned as work (e.g., junior or senior function), previous relevant, and cross-domain experience.

Relational coordination

The right sight of the model reflects the relational and communication dimensions of relational coordination. The model suggests that the coordination context, as shaped by structural parameters, foundational conditions, and resource availability may enable or constrain the development of RC. Individual catalysts can directly strengthen relational coordination by compensating for structural gaps.

5.3 Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the literature by bridging a critical conceptual gap between theories of organisational design and relational coordination. De Sitter's sociotechnical design principles (De Sitter et al., 1997; De Sitter, 1998) emphasize how optimal structural configurations can reduce coordination demands, aiming for self-steering systems where efficiency is achieved through minimized "bad structure" and enhanced self-regulation. However, this perspective often treats the actual process of coordination that emerges within these structures as a somewhat implicit outcome, a "black box" once the design is optimized. Conversely, Gittel's theory of relational coordination (2002) vividly describes the dynamic, communication-intensive processes essential for effective coordination in highly interdependent contexts, often accepting existing dependencies as a given condition rather than a potentially designable feature.

These findings integrate these perspectives by demonstrating how specific organisational design choices, as observed through the identified aggregate dimensions, profoundly influence the nature and emergence of coordination demands. This research illustrates how structural elements directly shape the capacity for cross-boundary alignment, counteracting tendencies toward narrow task focus, and crucially, determining the extent to which effective coordination relies on individual initiative versus embedded structural mechanisms. By revealing these linkages, this study clarifies how organisational design creates the very conditions under which relational coordination can more intrinsically emerge or, conversely, how structural deficiencies necessitate it as a compensatory and often fragile mechanism

In line with De Sitter's notion that "a system should be designed to steer itself in contexts of uncertainty" (1998, p.1), the results further suggest that structural design influences the extent to which coordination demands can be managed through embedded mechanisms rather than ad-hoc individual effort. This perspective reframes relational

coordination not only as a means of addressing existing uncertainty, as emphasized by Gittell's work, but also as a process that can be proactively supported or constrained by design choices. While no causal claims can be made, the patterns observed provide a conceptual basis for exploring how organisational design can reduce unnecessary coordination and uncertainty across domains and create more favourable conditions for relational coordination to emerge as part of a self-steering system.

Furthermore, this study offers a nuanced understanding of what De Sitter views as a "good" organisational structure beyond the optimization of individual units. While De Sitter's principles advocate for minimizing complexity and functional concentration to foster self-steering units, our findings indicate that an excessive focus on such unit-level optimization can create coordination gaps and dependencies between domains. This suggests that a truly optimal structural design, particularly in complex cross-functional environments, requires finding a broader organisational balance. Relational coordination, in this context, offers a critical lens to ensure that while individual units are empowered, the broader organisational system remains cohesive and integrated across boundaries.

Interestingly, the "Foundational design conditions" (see figure 2) identified in this study show strong conceptual resonance with the three integrating conditions proposed by Okhuysen and Bechky (2009): accountability, predictability, and common understanding. While this study approached the phenomenon of coordination from the combined lens of De Sitter's sociotechnical design theory and Gittell's relational coordination framework, the overlap suggests that these perspectives may converge on similar underlying mechanisms for enabling effective coordination. This conceptual alignment was not an explicit focus of the research but offers a promising avenue for future studies to integrate organisational design, coordination mechanisms, and relational dynamics into a more comprehensive framework.

6. Conclusion

This study seeks to provide an answer to the research question “In what ways does organisational structure influence relational coordination in cross-domain collaboration in municipalities?” By integrating De Sitter et al. their organisational design principles with Gittell’s relational coordination theory, the findings show that organisational structure shapes relational coordination primarily through its influence on the coordination context. Structural deficiencies, such as ambiguity, fragmentation, and missing shared direction mechanisms, generate coordination demands that often rely on informal solutions and individual efforts.

This study finds that organisational structure influences relational coordination by shaping the amount and nature of coordination dependencies, the degree of narrow focus, and the reliance on individual catalysts. Proactive design of a “good structure” with foundational design conditions and adequate resources can create a more favourable coordination context, reducing unnecessary uncertainty and reliance on individuals. This shifts the perspective from viewing relational coordination purely as a response to uncertainty, towards understanding how organisational design can proactively create a self-steering system in which relational coordination can thrive.

Ultimately, effective cross-domain coordination through relational coordination is shown to be rooted in organisational design. While the conceptual model proposes directional relationships, these reflect interpretive insights from the data rather than causal proof.

6.1 Practical implications

The findings highlight the importance of embedding clear role definitions, alignment between responsibility and expertise, and formal moments to establish shared direction into cross-domain collaborations through organisational design. Strengthening these elements can reduce unnecessary coordination dependencies, narrow focus, ad-hoc involvement, and reliance on individual initiative, enabling more sustainable collaboration. Municipal organisations and organisational design developers can use these insights to assess and adapt organisational structures before initiating complex, cross-domain assignments.

6.2 Limitations

This exploratory qualitative study provides in-depth insights, but its findings are subject to several limitations. First, the study does not aim for statistical generalizability, with insights being context-specific to the two municipalities and assignments examined. Second, the

reliance on self-reported interview data means findings are based on participants' subjective interpretations. The small sample of respondents with a varying degrees of involvement in the operational process meant that not all perspectives could be compared to one another. Lastly, as a snapshot in time, the study captures dynamic organisational processes at a particular moment, which as was apparent in municipality B, can evolve.

Additionally, the analysis involved interpretation shaped by my position as researcher. My prior work experience in and research on municipal organisations supported understanding of their complexity. Familiarity with the location of municipality A helped contextualise examples, while sufficient distance from the organisation and not knowing the respondents ensured independence. My background in architectural engineering aided comprehension of the technical and phasing complexity of the IKC project as well as urban planning aspects of the IHP project, adding depth to the interpretation.

During data collection, the iterative nature of the research meant that insights emerging in municipality A sometimes informed follow-up questions in municipality B. While this supported relevant comparison, it may have subtly influenced emphasis on certain topics. Efforts were made to counterbalance this by first inviting respondents to respond to open questions before introducing more targeted questions.

6.3 Future research

While this study examined how structural factors influence the coordination context, it did not analyse how specific coordination mechanisms could be embedded within organisations. Future research could investigate the influence of such different mechanism and how these should be embedded within the structure to facilitate effective coordination by the right format of communication. Also, more research on the mechanisms for shared direction could give more depth to the proposed conceptual model. Notably, the foundational design conditions identified in this study, including alignment of responsibility and expertise, clearly defined roles, and mechanisms for shared direction, show strong conceptual overlap with the integrating conditions described by Okhuysen and Bechky (2009). This convergence suggests that future research could explicitly integrate these perspectives to develop a more comprehensive framework for designing and enabling coordination.

Several themes emerged beyond the scope of this study but ask further exploration. These include the political-administrative dynamics shaping priorities, how assignments are formulated and their level of integrality across domains, the role of external actors such as

school boards and consultancy firms in shaping coordination processes and organisational structures, the impact of interim staff on embedding structures and relationships. The last one is particularly relevant given the high use of external hires in Dutch public organisations. Both assignment leaders in this study were interim hires, raising questions about continuity, relationships, and capacity building. Each of these factors may alter both the structural conditions and the relational dynamics within cross-domain collaboration.

Future research could also test and refine the conceptual model in a larger sample, across multiple municipalities and policy domains, to further understand the relationship between organisational structure and relational coordination in the public sector. Given that relational coordination has often been studied in healthcare but also in other settings (Bolton et al., 2021), applying the model in different organisational environments that work across departmental boundaries could provide valuable insights into its broader applicability.

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8. Appendix

Appendix A – Interview Guide

Interview Guideline - general (Dutch)

Introductie

Allereerst hartelijk dank dat u tijd heeft kunnen vrijmaken om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek. Mijn naam is Anne Rensen, ik ben Bregje Kohlen,

Wij doen onze masterscripties voor de masteropleiding aan de Radboud Universiteit over de effectiviteit van samenwerking aan Opgave X in Nederlandse gemeenten. We voeren dit onderzoek uit in samenwerking met het adviesbureau Berenschot.

In hoeverre bent u al op de hoogte over ons onderzoek?

Tijdens dit interview zullen wij een aantal vragen stellen over de complexe opgave X, wat u rol hierbinnen is en de samenwerking met domein X. Wij zijn vooral benieuwd naar uw persoonlijke ervaringen, interpretatie en inzichten. Er zijn dus geen goede of foute antwoorden.

Dit interview duurt ongeveer één uur. Is het oké voor u als we dit gesprek opnemen?

De opname zal worden gebruikt voor het transcriberen en het verwerken van de informatie. Nadat wij onze scriptie succesvol heb afgerond zullen we de opname verwijderen. De gegevens zullen we met zorg voor uw privacy verwerken. Dit houdt in dat we geen informatie zullen delen in het onderzoeksrapport dat herleidbaar is naar personen.

Dan start ik nu eerst de opname; <start opname>

Heeft u nog vragen voordat we beginnen?

Openingsvragen

1. Kunt u kort toelichten wat uw functie bij de gemeente [naam gemeente] inhoudt?
2. Welke rol vervult u binnen het [IKC/IHP]?
3. Sinds wanneer bent u werkzaam bij de [naam gemeente]?

Complexe opgave

4. Wat beschouwt u als het doel van het ontwikkelingsproject van [IKC/IHP]?
5. Welke werkzaamheden vinden er plaats om dit doel te realiseren?
6. Welke werkzaamheden verricht u binnen dit project?
7. Waarom bent u aangehaakt bij dit project? (rol/ perspectief/ kennis/ huidige werkzaamheden)

Samenwerking fysiek en sociaal domein

Binnen dit project is samenwerking tussen het fysiek en sociaal domein essentieel. We willen u daarom enkele vragen stellen over hoe u deze samenwerking ervaart binnen [IKC/IHP].

8. Hoe ervaart u de domein overstijgende samenwerking?
9. Met welke collega's werkt u vooral samen binnen dit project?
10. Hoe zijn de verantwoordelijkheden binnen deze samenwerking verdeeld?
11. Op welke manier en hoe vaak vindt afstemming plaats?
12. Welke knelpunten of belemmeringen ervaart u in afstemming?
 - a. Kunt u een situatie beschrijven waarin de afstemming binnen dit project minder goed verliep?
13. Wat werkt er goed in de samenwerking?
 - a. Heeft u daar een voorbeeld van?

Afrondende vragen

1. Dan zijn we nu aan het einde gekomen van dit interview. Hoe heeft u het ervaren?
2. Zijn er zaken die niet besproken zijn, maar waar u het nog over wilt hebben?

De volgende stap is dat wij een transcript gaan maken van dit interview. Nadat wij alle interviews heb afgenomen zullen wij starten met de analyse en het onderzoeksrapporten afmaken. Dit zullen wij ook met u delen zodra wij groen licht hebben gekregen van onze begeleiders. Naar verwachting is dit tussen juli en augustus.

Dan is onze dank dat u wilde meedoen erg groot. Wij waarderen de bereidheid en de tijd die u heeft genomen om ons te helpen.

Indien nodig: vraag naar andere collega's die ik kan benaderen voor een interview.

Interview guideline - managerial functions (Dutch)

Introductie

Allereerst hartelijk dank dat u tijd heeft kunnen vrijmaken om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek. Mijn naam is Anne Rensen, ik ben Bregje Kohlen,

Wij doen onze masterscripties voor de masteropleiding aan de Radboud Universiteit over de effectiviteit van samenwerking aan Opgave X in Nederlandse gemeenten. We voeren dit onderzoek uit in samenwerking met het adviesbureau Berenschot.

In hoeverre bent u al op de hoogte over ons onderzoek?

Tijdens dit interview zullen wij een aantal vragen stellen over de complexe opgave X, wat u rol hierbinnen is en de samenwerking met domein X. Wij zijn vooral benieuwd naar uw persoonlijke ervaringen, interpretatie en inzichten. Er zijn dus geen goede of foute antwoorden.

Dit interview duurt ongeveer één uur. Is het oké voor u als we dit gesprek opnemen?

De opname zal worden gebruikt voor het transcriberen en het verwerken van de informatie. Nadat wij onze scriptie succesvol heb afgerond zullen we de opname verwijderen. De gegevens zullen we met zorg voor uw privacy verwerken. Dit houdt in dat we geen informatie zullen delen in het onderzoeksrapport dat herleidbaar is naar personen.

Dan start ik nu eerst de opname; <start opname>

Heeft u nog vragen voordat we beginnen?

Openingsvragen

1. Kunt u kort toelichten wat uw functie bij de gemeente [naam gemeente] inhoudt?
2. Welke rol vervult u binnen het [IKC/IHP]?
3. Sinds wanneer bent u werkzaam bij de [naam gemeente]?

Complexe opgave

4. Wat beschouwt u als het doel van het ontwikkelingsproject van [IKC/IHP]?
5. Welke werkzaamheden vinden er plaats om dit doel te realiseren?
6. Welke werkzaamheden verricht u binnen dit project?
 - a. Waarvoor komen mensen bij u?
7. Waarom en wanneer is er besloten om de verantwoordelijkheid voor het [IHP/ IKC] bij [verantwoordelijke domein] te leggen?
8. Wat is de rol van [domein respondent] binnen het [IKC/IHP]?
 - a. Wie/welke functies moeten er vanuit [domein respondent] betrokken worden?

Samenwerking fysiek en sociaal domein

Binnen dit project is samenwerking tussen het fysiek en sociaal domein essentieel. We willen u daarom enkele vragen stellen over hoe u deze samenwerking ervaart binnen [IKC/IHP].

9. Hoe werken jullie samen aangezien de opgave beide domeinen betreft?
 - a. Wie is formeel verantwoordelijk?
 - b. Spreken jullie elkaar structureel?
10. Hoe ervaart u de domein overstijgende samenwerking?
 - a. Is het verloop van deze samenwerking vergelijkbaar met andere opgaven binnen de gemeente waarbij de domeinen ook moeten samenwerken?
11. Hoe zijn de verantwoordelijkheden binnen deze samenwerking verdeeld?
12. Wat valt je op in de samenwerking?
13. Welke knelpunten of belemmeringen ziet u in afstemming?
 - a. Kunt u een situatie beschrijven waarin de afstemming binnen dit project minder goed verliep?

14. Wat werkt er goed in de samenwerking?

a. Heeft u daar een voorbeeld van?

Afrondende vragen

15. Dan zijn we nu aan het einde gekomen van dit interview. Hoe heeft u het ervaren?

16. Zijn er zaken die niet besproken zijn, maar waar u het nog over wilt hebben?

De volgende stap is dat wij een transcript gaan maken van dit interview. Nadat wij alle interviews heb afgenomen zullen wij starten met de analyse en het onderzoeksrapporten afmaken. Dit zullen wij ook met u delen zodra wij groen licht hebben gekregen van onze begeleiders. Naar verwachting is dit tussen juli en augustus.

Dan is onze dank dat u wilde meedoen erg groot. Wij waarderen de bereidheid en de tijd die u heeft genomen om ons te helpen.

Indien nodig: vraag naar andere collega's die ik kan benaderen voor een interview.

Appendix B – Coding scheme

The following pages contain the complete coding scheme with all first order codes, 2nd order themes, subdimensions and aggregate dimensions. As well as the removed codes in the second coding round.

Grounded 1st order codes	2nd order theme	Subdimension	Aggregate dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Geen vaste organisatorische plek voor integraal maatschappelijk vastgoed 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Domeinoverstijgende samenwerking vereist actief zoeken en verbinden tussen domeinen 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Wens voor vaste organisatorische plek voor integraal onderwischuivering 2 <input type="checkbox"/> geen vaste manier van domeinoverstijgend werken in de organisatie ingebed 2 <input type="checkbox"/> geen vaste manier van werken ingebed in organisatie 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Maatschappelijk vastgoed verbind domeinen, maar is formeel eendimensionaal gepositioneerd 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Gebrek aan sturing versterkt persoonsgebonden afhankelijkheid voor succes 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Inhuur belemmert structurele inbedding van kennis en samenwerking 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Tijdelijke invulling van functies leidt niet tot structurele verbetering 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Betrokkenheid van sociaal domein veranderd over de fasen van een bouwproject 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Structuur rondom afstemming is persoonsgebonden en kan wegvallen bij vertrek van collega's 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Historie van eerdere samenwerking geeft structurele verbinding voor betrokkenheid 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Wens voor structurele inbedding zodat domeinoverstijgende samenwerking automatisch wordt 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Zoeken naar concreet maken hoe en wanneer het sociaal domein aan moet sluiten 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Zoeken naar manier om domein overstijgende samenwerking vorm te geven 2 <input type="checkbox"/> zoeken naar structurele manier van samenwerken rondom maatschappelijk vastgoed 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Samenwerking opstarten is moeizaam, als het eenmaal loopt gaat het prima 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Zoektocht naar inhoudelijke verbinding tussen maatschappelijke opgave en onderwischuivering 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Samenwerking heeft geen formele rolverdeling 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Verdeling van taken is niet formeel ingericht 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Mijn functie is niet wat ik doe 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Cruciaal om rollen en verantwoordelijkheden vast te leggen om domeinoverstijgend werken vorm te geven 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Geen duidelijke afbakening van rollen en taken zorgt voor medewerkers inzetten in een rol die niet de bedoeling is 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Men weet vaak niet precies wat de rol van andere mensen is 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Iedereen levert vanuit eigen domein of rol een bijdrage aan het IHP 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Iedereen levert vanuit eigen kennis een bijdrage aan de opgave 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Fysiek domein neemt geen verantwoordelijkheid als project stil valt, prima als het rustiger is 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Men focust op eigen afgebakend stukje voor verantwoordelijkheid, terwijl vraagstukken niet solistisch te benaderen zijn 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Iedereen levert vanuit eigen kennis een bijdrage, men vertrouwd op elkaars expertise daarin 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Fysiek domein voelt geen tot beperkte verantwoordelijkheid 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Verwarring bestaat over de taak en rolverdeling van mensen, men weet niet waar die verantwoordelijk voor is 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Afstemming gebeurt alleen bij directe relevantie 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Afstemming op inhoud in plaats van structureel zorgt soms voor te late aanhaking of missen van context 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Betrokkenheid is gebaseerd op functies, de inhoudelijke kennis die men heeft 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Afstemming alleen wanneer nodig is om anderen te ontlasten 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Afstemming en concretisering ontstaan buiten formele rollen en taken om 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ik ben daar eigenlijk niet bij betrokken, maar ik bemoei me er wel mee 3 <input type="checkbox"/> duidelijke functie indeling maakt juiste werknemer vinden mogelijk 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Boetsen met mensen om opgave op te bouwen 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Afstemming op inhoud, niet gestructureerd via vaste momenten 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Afstemming gebeurt via lean kernteam met gerichte inhoudelijke inbreng 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Aanvullende fysieke rollen worden af en toe informeel betrokken op eigen initiatief 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Taken buiten formele rol opgenomen om samenwerking te reddenn 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Persoonlijke aandacht om collega's erbij te betrekken bevordert samenwerking 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Centrale figuren coördineren afstemming binnen schil van betrokkenen 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Mijn functie is niet wat ik doe, ik vervul een verbindende en oplossingsgerichte rol 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Afstemming ontwikkelt zich relationeel, ligt niet formeel vast 2 <input type="checkbox"/> succes van de opgave wordt gecreërd door individu, niet structureel ingebed 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Informele afstemming bepaalt wie wanneer aanhaakt 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Onderlinge afstemming over betrokkenheid 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Betrokken buiten formele taken of uren om 1 <input type="checkbox"/> In integrale afstemming meedenken met belang van ander domein 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Verantwoordelijkheid nemen vraagt actieve aansporing 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Succes in afstemming vraagt persoonlijke ervaring en vaardigheid binnen gemeentelijke systeem dat als een spel spelen wordt beschreven 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of formal cross-domain structures Temporary and person-dependent embedding Struggling to formalize collaboration practices Lack of clear roles and responsibilities Ad-hoc and function-based coordination Informal and person-driven collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of structural embedding Ambiguity in roles, tasks & responsibilities Ambiguity in organisational structure 	

<p>1 <u>○ Ondanks dat onderlinge relatie nog niet maakt dat men mee zou werken is iedereen wel heel bereidwillig om bijdrage te leveren</u></p> <p>2 <u>○ Persoonlijke motivatie om bij te dragen aan samenwerking</u></p> <p>3 <u>○ Persoonlijke karakteristieken beïnvloeden effectiviteit van onderlinge samenwerking</u></p>		
<p>1 <u>○ Onderlinge relaties zijn minstens zo effectief voor goede samenwerking als kennis, expertise, goed plannen etc</u></p> <p>2 <u>○ De mensen moeten onderling klikken om goed samen te kunnen werken</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Samenwerking verloopt goed door positionering binnenzelfde thema en communicatieve vaardigheden van medewerkers</u></p>	relational substitutes for structure	
<p>1 <u>○ Vooraf is niet duidelijk wie je nodig hebt voor een opgave wat leidt tot maar wat doen</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Vooraf wordt onvoldoende geïnventariseerd wie, wat en wanneer nodig is</u></p> <p>2 <u>○ Er is nog niet duidelijk wat er in capaciteit nodig is vanuit het sociaal domein voor het IHP</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ capaciteitsdruk sociaal domein door voortuderende vraag</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Er is meer vraag dan capaciteit</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Tijd is geld en capaciteit is schaars, geeft knelpunt in samenwerking</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Plannen van werkzaamheden is geen standaard vereiste wat problemen in capaciteit geeft</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Maatschappelijk vastgoed is niet in capaciteit jaarplanning geborgd wat leidt tot knelpunten in planning van fysiek</u></p>	Lack of capacity planning and forecasting	
<p>2 <u>○ Geen domeinoverstijgend syteem om capaciteit te borgen</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Geen systeem om capaciteit te borgen vraagt om vooruit denken voor afstemmingen</u></p> <p>2 <u>○ Gebrek aan structurele bezetting leidt tot informele zelforganisatie</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Gebrek van capaciteitsystemen zorgt voor informele zelforganisatie en meer afstemming</u></p> <p>4 <u>○ Tijd, capaciteit en personeelstekort belemmeren integrale afstemming en samenwerking</u></p>	Insufficient capacity systems and structures	
<p>1 <u>○ Formatie moet op orde zijn om de samenwerking op maatschappelijk vastgoed te kunnen bolwerken</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Capaciteit moet goed gepland zijn om samenwerking te kunnen faciliteren</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Helderheid in planning helpt om capaciteit te waarborgen, nog niet gewend om zo te werken</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Teamleiders zijn verantwoordelijk voor capaciteitsinzet en juiste kwaliteit van inhoud om werk te kunnen doen, die kunnen helpen om juiste inzet te bepalen</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Door vaste stuurgroep kan overleg over capaciteit goed plaats vinden</u></p>	Need for structural embedding of capacity	Capacity constraints
<p>3 <u>○ Externen worden ingehuurd terwijl intern capaciteit en/of kennis beschikbaar is, hierdoor mist samenwerking kennis op inhoudelijke context</u></p> <p>2 <u>○ Gebrek aan capaciteitscalculatie en planning leidt tot suboptimale samenstelling van teams</u></p> <p>3 <u>○ Beperkte formatie op onderdeel verhindert structurele betrokkenheid en afstemming</u></p> <p>2 <u>○ Beperkte middelen en capaciteit beperken integrale afstemming</u></p> <p>2 <u>○ Tekort aan mensen geeft spanning op samenwerking</u></p> <p>6 <u>○ Capaciteit moet goed geborgd zijn om domeinoverstijgende samenwerking te kunnen faciliteren</u></p>	Capacity shortage	
<p>13 <u>○ Formele domeintoewijzing komt niet overeen met inhoudelijke expertise</u></p> <p>4 <u>○ Formele verantwoordelijkheid matcht niet met benodigde inhoudelijke kennis voor vraagstuk</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Inhoudelijke expertise en uitvoering liggen bij fysiek domein, ondanks formele borging bij sociaal</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Inhoudelijke kennis en ervaring matcht niet met verantwoordelijkheid rol binnen opgave</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ sociaal heeft focus op gebouwen niet op onderwijs inhoudelijk</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Domeinoverstijgende samenwerking had optimaler vormgegeven kunnen worden met meer verantwoordelijkheid bij fysiek</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ formele domeintoewijzing past inhoudelijk misschien beter onder fysiek, maar door binnen sociaal is afstemming met beleidsmedewerkers wel makkelijker</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Onderwijshuisvesting bij sociaal domein zorgt voor betrekken onderwijs</u></p> <p>3 <u>○ Knip moet gemaakt worden tussen beleidskant en uitvoeringskant bij onderwijshuisvesting</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Rol van sociaal domein is beperkt binnen opgave</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Verantwoordelijkheid door fysiek domein wordt niet gevoeld om dat die bij sociaal domein ligt</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Domeinoverstijgende samenwerking is aanwezig maar het gaat vaak toch over de stenen</u></p>	Responsibility-expertise misalignment	Misalignment between responsibility and expertise
<p>2 <u>○ Helderere domeinverantwoordelijkheid vergemakkelijkt afstemming</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Onderwijshuisvesting is dermate complex dat je het werkproces compact moet houden</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Beperkt aantal aanspreekpunten binnen fysiek domein maakt verantwoordelijkheden overzichtelijk</u></p> <p>2 <u>○ Domeintoewijzing verantwoordelijkheid opgave als strategische keuze voor betere afstemming</u></p>	Need for role and domain clarity	
<p>2 <u>○ Gemeente moet investeren op nieuwe instroom om samenwerking te bevorderen</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Beperkte kennis door korte aanstelling is geen belemmering voor de samenwerking, dat kun je opbouwen</u></p> <p>1 <u>○ Beperkte kennis door korte aanstelling vertraagt samenwerking</u></p> <p>2 <u>○ Duur van aanstelling varieert, langer werkt prettiger samen</u></p>	knowledge-driven role shaping	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Een gedeeld doel en noodzaak bevordert <u>samenwerking</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Samenbrengen verschillende opgaven van <u>domeinen voor gedragen visie</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Besef van samenwerking ontstaat na uitleggen van <u>doel</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Gebrek aan gedeeld doel laat proces vastlopen</u> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Toevoegen van een gezamenlijke visie aan het IHP <u>vergemakkelijk inhoudelijke afstemming</u> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Zonder gedeeld doel blijft men binnen eigen <u>opgave werken</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Er moet een duidelijke visie zijn om samenwerking op maatschappelijk vastgoed uit te kunnen voeren 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Behoeftte aan ontschotte aanpak op basis van <u>gezamenlijke wijkvisie</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Een duidelijk doel en scope maakt afstemming <u>effectief</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Integrale samenwerking op basis van gedeelde visie versterkt gevoel van erkenning en <u>betrokkenheid</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Integrale samenwerking maakt preventief werken mogelijk waarmee sociale doelen kunnen worden <u>bewaald</u> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Tijdsdruk en noodzaak maakt dat men zelfde doel <u>heeft en effectief kan afstemmen</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Urgentie, gedeeld doel, en persoonlijke benadering van werknemers kunnen samenwerking bevorderen 	<p>Shared vision framework</p>	<p>Lack of mechanisms for shared direction</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Voor goede samenwerking moet men uitspreken <u>wat je wil bereiken en wat daarvoor nodig is</u> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Zoektocht naar tot waar je verantwoordelijkheid als <u>gemeente loopt, wat je integraliteit bepaalt</u> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Verbreding van scope creëert ruimte voor integrale <u>samenwerking</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ongedefinieerde scope belemmert tijdige en <u>integrale betrokkenheid</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Scope is gaandeweg gedefinieerd wat integraliteit <u>en rolverdeling vooraf niet helder maakte</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Visie draagt bij aan verbreding opgave, maar wordt <u>nooit niet vertaald naar organisatie</u> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Actieve overtuiging nodig om onderwijshuisvesting als gedeeld belang te positioneren 	<p>Ambiguity in scope and responsibility</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Verschil in toetsbaarheid en doeloriëntatie tussen <u>domeinen maakt afstemming complex</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Positionering bepaalt ruimte voor samenwerking <u>en integraliteit</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Preventie en investeren aan de voorkant is moeilijk <u>te legitimeren</u> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Opgave verantwoordelijke heeft een sturende en <u>leider rol</u> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Verantwoordelijkheid voor afstemming rondom IHP <u>ligt bij R1</u> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Verantwoordelijkheid voor samenstelling <u>samenwerking ligt bij projectleider</u> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Verantwoordelijkheid voor voortgang project ligt bij <u>projectleider</u> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> projectmatige structuur ondersteunt effectieve <u>domeinoverstijgende afstemming</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Gebrek aan oppakken van taken bellemert <u>samenwerking</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptatie van coördinatie is afhankelijk van je <u>positie en houding</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Betrokkenheid beperkt om werk behapbaar en <u>gericht te houden</u> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Afstemming is afhankelijk van vaardigheden <u>projectleider</u> 	<p>Assignment-based coordination responsibility</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Domeinoverstijgende kennis vanuit eerdere ervaring zorgt voor in kunnen vullen van <u>verbindende rol</u> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Effectieve samenwerking hangt af van persoonlijke vaardigheden en houding tot afstemming en <u>communicatie</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Verbindende rol in opgave is nodig en mogelijk <u>door ervaring in meerdere posities</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> sociale vaardigheden van mensen bepalen manier <u>en mate van integraliteit</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Individuele brede expertise overstijgt formele <u>positionering binnen een domein</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Je positie binnen de organisatie bepaalt of je <u>invloed kunt uitoefenen op de opgave</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Kwaliteit van sociaal domein afhankelijk van <u>persoonlijke inschatting</u> 	<p>Personal characteristics shaping coordination</p>	<p>Coordination via assigned leadership</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Ik vervul een <u>overstijgende brede rol</u> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Integrale samenwerking komt tot stand door <u>individueel initiatief</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Integraliteit van de opgave wordt gecreërd door <u>individueel, niet structureel ingebed</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Integraliteit wordt vormgegeven vanuit initiatief van <u>individueel, niet als gegeven in opgave</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Domeinoverstijgend werken vereist verbindende <u>rol, mogelijk door eerdere relaties</u> 	<p>Individual initiative</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> succesvolle samenwerking ontstaat via <u>verbindende personen</u> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Goede samenwerking begint bij onderlinge relaties <u>en informeel contact</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Persoonlijke relatie maakt afstemming mogelijk</u> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Gebrek aan relationele kennismaking belemmert <u>vertrouwen en samenwerking</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Wederzijds vertrouwen bepaalt of je iets gedaan <u>krijgt</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Vertrouwde relatie door eerdere samenwerking <u>heeft ruimte om zelfstandig te handelen</u> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Mensen wijzen op afhankelijkheden 	<p>Reliance on informal relations</p>	

1st order codes

- 2 ○ Beperkte financiële middelen dwingen tot onderlinge afstemming
- 1 ○ Capaciteitsinschatting gebeurt via overleg met opdrachtgever en teamplanning
- 1 ○ De juiste inhuur vinden voor onderwijshuisvesting is nog lastig
- 1 ○ Personeelstekort leidt tot noodzaak voor inhuur
- 1 ○ Financiële middelen maken een afhankelijkheid tussen het fysiek en sociaal domein waar afstemming voor nodig is
- 1 ○ Beleid moet dienen aan uitvoering als een kader om mee te kunnen werken
- 2 ○ De domeinen hebben elkaar nodig
- 3 ○ Fysiek domein baseert keuzes op sociaal-inhoudelijke input, stenen volgen inhoud
- 1 ○ Fysiek en sociaal domein zijn onlosmakelijk verbonden in praktijk, ondanks formele scheiding
- 2 ○ Fysiek faciliterend aan sociaal doel
- 1 ○ De concreetheit van een schoolgebouw helpt om de sociale doelen ook concreet te maken
- 1 ○ Financiële realisatie van onderwijshuisvesting is afhankelijk van fysieke gebiedsontwikkeling
- 1 ○ Wens om meer wij te zijn tussen domeinen
- 1 ○ Er moet beleid zijn om samenwerking in uitvoering van maatschappelijk vastgoed te voorzien

- 1 ○ Registratie van vastgoed bezit en wat je ermee doet moet op orde zijn voor effectieve samenwerking in maatschappelijk vastgoed
- 1 ○ Toezichtbehoefte leidinggevende belemmert integrale samenwerking buiten vaste plek
- 1 ○ facilitaire eisen aan gebruik ruimten en werkplekken belemmeren integrale samenwerking
- 1 ○ Fysieke plek om elkaar te treffen en samen te werken op onderwijshuisvesting ontbreekt
- 2 ○ Wethouder voert kwaliteitscheck uit waarbij domeinoverstijgende afstemming plaatsvindt
- 1 ○ Informele aanzet leidt tot formele actie
- 1 ○ Integrale samenwerking is vanaf het begin aanwezig
- 1 ○ Beperkte toetsbaarheid van sociale beleidsdoelen in IHP-praktijk
- 1 ○ Gebrek aan gezamenlijke verantwoordelijkheid belemmert samenwerking
- 1 ○ IHP als brug tussen wettelijke taak en beleidsambitie
- 2 ○ Sturing op wettelijke taken beperkt ruimte voor integraliteit
- 1 ○ IHP biedt overzicht in planning, maar vraagt andere vorm van samenwerking dan projectfase
- 2 ○ Samenwerking voorbij wettelijke taak vraagt expliciete afstemming, middelen en wederkerige bereidheid
- 1 ○ Management zit op een lijn en kan sturing geven door aanhaakt te zijn
- 3 ○ Management legt de basis voor domeinoverstijgende samenwerking
- 1 ○ Wettelijk minimum stelt grenzen aan samenwerking en bevordert verkokering
- 4 ○ beleidsmatige ambitie overstijgt formele verantwoordelijkheid en zeggenschap
- 2 ○ Beperkte mandaat belemmert domeinoverstijgende samenwerking
- 1 ○ Fysieke domein kan taken afdwingbaar realiseren
- 1 ○ Het sociaal domein is meer beschouwend, hun belangen zijn meer beleidsmatig
- 2 ○ mismatch tussen gemeentelijke doelen en afwinbare bevoegdheden
- 3 ○ sociaal domein mist formeel mandaat voor doelen
- 4 ○ Sturing door management is bepalend voor uitvoering samenwerking
- 1 ○ Domein-overstijgende programma's vragen **erkenning en sturing vanuit de top**

2nd order theme

- 1 ○ Onderwijs is in het IKC project huisvesting, niet bredere sociale doelen rondom onderwijs en jeugdzorg
 - 1 ○ Het sociale aspect is de gebruiker, niet de doelen van het sociaal domein
 - 3 ○ Samenwerking sociaal domein functioneert als inputleverancier i.o.v. co-creator
 - 1 ○ Sociaal is binnen uitvoering gebruik van gebouw niet samenwerking op sociale doelen
 - 2 ○ Sociaal niet als co-creator maar voor formele verantwoordelijkheid en communicatie met schoolbesturen
 - 1 ○ Samenwerking wordt omschreven als verantwoordelijkheid in sociaal domein en inhuren van expertise van fysiek domein
 - 2 ○ IHP valt formeel niet onder sociaal domein, maar sociaal verbindt zich informeel
 - 6 ○ Samenwerking in uitvoering betreft vooral fysiek domein, betrokkenheid sociaal domein is vooral input voorkant en externe afstemming
 - 2 ○ Fysiek een sociaal botsen elkaar niet in IKC project, men werkt oplossingsgericht
 - 1 ○ Sociaal past aan op de al bestaande dynamiek van **samenwerking binnen fysiek**
- Symbolic participation of social domain